UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA Alexandria Division UNITED STATES OF AMERICA -vs-: Case No. 1:19-cr-57 SANG THANH HUYNH, Defendant. : -----: MOTIONS HEARING October 4, 2019 Before: Liam O'Grady, USDC Judge APPEARANCES: Carina A. Cuellar, Counsel for the United States

Marvin D. Miller, Counsel for the Defendant

The Defendant, Sang T. Huynh, in person

			2
	INDEX		
OPENING ARGUMENTS BY:			
MR. MILLER MS. CUELLAR MR. MILLER		4 8 10	
WITNESS	EXAMINATION	PAGE	
JOSEPH HOANG			
	DIRECT CROSS REDIRECT RECROSS	11 16 18 19	
CLOSING ARGUMENTS BY:			
MR. MILLER MS. CUELLAR MR. MILLER		19 24 25	
COURT'S RULINGS			
THE COURT		26	

presented, made no findings of fact.

If you look at page 2, I would ask that the whole thing be stricken. They say that there was a friend who made statements to an agent. That's news to me, I know nothing about that in their third bullet point.

In the fourth bullet point they talk about a storage facility. Of course, they left out two important facts. One of which is the video shows he hasn't been in that facility for well over a year to a year-and-a-half, and they didn't put that in the facts.

And they also didn't put into the facts that there were two other people that had full access to the facility.

And that wasn't raised below.

And there are Bank of America and all that and Naval Credit Union on page 3, or conclusions, and according to Justice Rehnquist, those conclusions would not suffice for a probable cause determination. And he made it real clear in <a href="Leon">Leon</a> that you can't give a judge your conclusions. You have to give a judge facts for probable cause even when the Rules of Evidence don't apply and hearsay is fully admissible.

That the suspected drug rip-off, that's their speculation, you can't put -- I'm an agent, let me make a speculation, make a guess, and you take it as true. They can't do that on their fourth bullet on 3.

Their bullet on 4 is a conclusion, therefore. They

have put in no evidence. There is no witnesses to him getting any drugs at any time in the case where CI so-and-so says, I was present and he received. Or CI so-and-so plus 2 says, I was present and he distributed. There is none of that at all.

The Snapchat accounts, the videos and stuff like that, remind me of an individual named -- what's his name? Lud Foe and another one named Caprun who are -- what do you call it, gangster rappers. Caprun has 36 million viewers and Foe has 20 million viewers of videos that are almost identical to the ones that they showed him, which is what we were going to show you this morning, to show running around with what looks like marijuana, money, guns, and all that stuff. And 20 million and 36 million viewers for a commercial operation and him doing the same kind of thing, doesn't add anything one way or the other to a bail determination.

And this new thing about the 2,000 deleted text messages and their speculation about what they are, well, he deleted messages; therefore, we will conclude in a presumption of guilt that they are bad. That's no basis for that.

So the only evidence that you have that we agree about is his criminal record, except there is a misrepresentation in the criminal record. I object to the fact that in this court, unlike in other courts, you can't keep the Pretrial Services report so you can analyze it, take your time and go over it with your client and make sure that it is

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     correct. But there are no failure to appear convictions that
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     I'm aware of. I am not saying he wasn't charged, because he
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     was, but there are no convictions.
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               So we have facts that were never considered below.
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     Facts that have not been subjected to cross-examination. Facts
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     that are speculation and guesswork. And that's not a basis,
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     according to Justice Rehnquist when he was first analyzing the
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     Act in the Salerno decisions at pages 750, '51 and '52, nor is
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     it consistent with the Act and the requirements under
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     subsection (i) which requires a specific finding of fact
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     followed by -- using those specifically found facts so we know
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     what they are -- specific reasons, a statement of reasons how
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     the facts support the reasons, and then a conclusion.
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               All we have is a conclusion. So that's no basis for
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     you to make any review of any magistrate judge's decision
    because you don't have one. Or if you do, I've never seen it.
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               So I don't know how the Court wishes to proceed on
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     that part, but --
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               THE COURT: Well, he's been indicted on a ten-year
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     minimum mandatory offense.
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               MR. MILLER: That's correct.
22
               THE COURT: There is a presumption that no conditions
23
     of bond --
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               MR. MILLER: That's right.
25
               THE COURT: -- are appropriate.
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course, after the defendant had been arrested and brought to our district. There was a search conducted at the facility, the results of which are described in that bullet. That is the only new piece of information.

Also, Mr. Miller I think has misread the final bullet point. What it says is the Cellebrite analysis of one of those phones recovered over 2,000 messages. There is no speculation that there were 2,000 messages deleted that may have contained drug-related texts. The texts have been recovered. And based on the review of those messages, they are clearly drug related.

I can address more of the facts, but I just think before we call the agent, to be clear, Mr. Miller did subject him to cross-examination.

And one of the bullets not put in here that I would bring to the Court's attention is that the agent received permission to bring in electronics before Magistrate Judge Nachmanoff's hearing. And in that he played two, approximately two minutes of a podcast recovered from the defendant's phone. In that the defendant is speaking entirely, mostly swearing and using racial epithets.

In that he describes the entire rise of the gangs of which he is a part of. And in the final two minutes he describes how he is going to gain revenge for his uncle's murder, and that he holds grudges, and proceeds to talk about if he sees those people, they're going to be in "his sights,"

1 which is clearly a reference to a firearm and sights, Your 2 Honor. That is something that the judge also heard and is not 3 referred to in this filing. 4 THE COURT: All right, thank you. 5 Mr. Miller, do you want to respond to that? MR. MILLER: Yes. They only played part of the 6 7 Nothing about gang development. They talked about 8 his anger over his uncle being killed, which was in 2013. 9 And so, nobody has been -- he's not been engaged in 10 any violence with anyone that relates to that. And this is 11 2019, and it's October already. 12 So he was on a rant. Years ago you would rant with 13 your friends, you would rant in a bar. Today people rant with 14 a podcast. But the proof is in the pudding, and there has been 15 no action. So the rant is the rant. 16 THE COURT: Do you want to cross-examine the agent on 17 the seizures made of the storage facility? 18 MR. MILLER: Well, I would have liked to have had the 19 search warrant for that and --THE COURT: You've already had -- he had a hearing in 20 21 California. 22 MR. MILLER: Right. 23 THE COURT: You were present, cross-examined the 24 agent before Judge Nachmanoff. Judge Nachmanoff in his order

of detention pending trial found that it was a ten-year minimum

1 mandatory, and that no conditions had been found that would 2 override that presumption. The defendant has not introduced 3 sufficient evidence to rebut the presumption. Detention is 4 ordered. 5 He adopted in his finding that the defendant argued for bond. The Court accepted as factual the information 6 7 contained in the Pretrial Services report. A more detailed 8 description of the findings was stated in open court and is 9 available for transcription. 10 So Judge Nachmanoff did what was necessary in making 11 the findings that he did. I'm not going to revisit -- and 12 having -- your having had the opportunity to cross-examine the 13 agent once on all but the storage facility --14 MR. MILLER: I could do that, briefly, if Your Honor 15 please. 16 THE COURT: Okay. Ms. Cuellar, call the agent and go 17 over the facility search. 18 MS. CUELLAR: Yes, Your Honor. At this time the 19 United States calls Special Agent Joseph Hoang. 20 THE COURT: All right. Good morning, sir. Please 21 come forward and be sworn. 22 NOTE: The witness is sworn. 23 JOSEPH HOANG, called by counsel for the United 24 States, first being duly sworn, testifies and states:

25

DIRECT EXAMINATION

- 1 BY MS. CUELLAR:
- 2 Q. Good morning. Can you state your full name for the
- 3 record.
- 4 A. Joseph Hoang.
- 5 Q. And can you spell your last name.
- 6 A. H-o-a-n-g.
- 7 Q. Where are you employed?
- 8 A. With the FBI.
- 9 Q. What is your position with the FBI?
- 10 A. I'm a Special agent with the FBI.
- 11 Q. And are you the lead case agent in the investigation of
- 12 the Reccless Tigers?
- 13 A. Yes, I am.
- 14 Q. And as part of that investigation, are you familiar with
- 15 an individual by the name of Sang Huynh?
- 16 A. Yes, I am.
- 17 Q. And how long have you investigated Mr. Sang Huynh?
- 18 A. Since 2013.
- 19 Q. And are you familiar with his appearance?
- 20 A. Yes, ma'am.
- 21 Q. And is he present in the courtroom today?
- 22 A. Yes, he is.
- 23 Q. Can you please identify him.
- 24 A. He is sitting at the table right here in the green
- 25 jumpsuit.

- THE COURT: I'll note the identification of Mr.
- 2 Huynh.
- 3 Q. Now, recently in the investigation of Mr. Huynh, did the
- 4 FBI obtain a search warrant for a facility in California?
- 5 A. Yes, we did.
- 6 Q. Approximately when was that search warrant obtained?
- 7 A. Approximately two weeks ago.
- 8 Q. And where is that storage facility located?
- 9 A. In Garden Groove, California.
- 10 Q. And how did this storage facility come to the FBI's
- 11 attention?
- 12 A. We actually got two tips. One that came to the Threat
- 13 Intake, which was a phone call, an anonymous tip, and another
- 14 e-mail tip too.
- 15 Q. And what was the content of this tip?
- 16 A. The content said, there is a person by the name of Sang
- 17 | Huynh that will have a bond hearing today at 2 o'clock. Do not
- 18 let him out. He has a storage facility in Garden Grove. It
- 19 | gave that address and the unit number. He has guns and drugs
- 20 | in there. If you let him go, he will clean it out and
- 21 disappear.
- 22 Q. And what did you do based upon this information?
- 23 A. We called the storage unit, found out there was a storage
- 24 | unit under Mr. Huynh's name, and got a grand jury subpoena and
- 25 all that stuff, and then subsequently got a search warrant.

- 1 Q. And after the search warrant was obtained, did law
- 2 enforcement conduct a search?
- 3 A. Yes, they did.
- 4 Q. Were you present for that search?
- 5 A. No, I was not.
- 6 Q. Have you spoken to the agents who were present?
- 7 A. Yes, I have.
- 8 Q. And have you reviewed information that was obtained from
- 9 the search?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. And what did law enforcement seize during the search?
- 12 A. An Uzi with a 30-round magazine. All types of ammo from
- 13 .222 rounds to 9mm. Some cocaine, or something that field
- 14 tested positive for cocaine. Approximately 50 to 100 pills of
- 15 | Xanax. A money counter. A Reccless Tigers T-shirt. A
- 16 Strugless T-shirt. Three cell phones. Reccless Tigers key
- 17 | chains and business cards.
- 18 Q. Were notebooks that appeared to be consistent with being
- 19 | drug --
- 20 MR. MILLER: Objection to leading questions, Your
- 21 Honor.
- 22 THE COURT: Overruled.
- 23 BY MS. CUELLAR: (Continuing)
- Q. Were notebooks seized during the search?
- 25 A. Yes, two.

- 1 Q. And have you physically reviewed those notebooks?
- 2 A. Yes, I have.
- 3 Q. And how long have you been investigating narcotics
- 4 offenses?
- 5 A. Since 2012.
- 6 Q. And during that time, have you reviewed other notebooks
- 7 seized during searches of drug dealers' residences?
- 8 A. Yes, I have.
- 9 Q. Now, based on your training and experience, what do these
- 10 notebooks appear to be?
- 11 A. Ledgers, owe sheets.
- 12 Q. And what are ledgers and owe sheets?
- 13 A. Basically an accounting of who owes what type of money and
- 14 how much.
- 15 Q. And in your review of these notebooks, do you recognize
- 16 any names?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 Q. And are any of these individuals also indicted in the same
- 19 | indictment as the defendant?
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 Q. Do you remember any of those names here today when you
- 22 testify?
- 23 A. Yes.
- Q. And who are those names?
- 25 A. Teddy. Starter.

- Q. And who is Teddy?
- 2 A. Teddy is Richard Pak.
- 3 Q. And who is Starter?
- 4 A. Starter is Mr. Hong, last name Hong.
- 5 Q. And they are both indicted in this case?
- 6 A. Correct.

- 7 Q. Now, during that search, was a mask also seized?
- 8 A. Correct.
- 9 Q. What significance, if any, is there of that mask?
- 10 A. We had a social media post with Mr. Huynh in the bathtub
- 11 | wearing an anonymous mask holding guns. And behind him was
- 12 marijuana, cough syrup, stacks of money.
- 13 Q. And based on your review of the social media post and the
- 14 mask that was seized, is it the same mask?
- 15 A. It is exactly the same mask, yes.
- MS. CUELLAR: No further questions, Your Honor.
- 17 THE COURT: All right. Cross-examination.
- 18 CROSS-EXAMINATION
- 19 BY MR. MILLER:
- 20 Q. You know that the storage facility had a lock that
- 21 required a key for entry, don't you?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 Q. And you know that no key for entry to that lock was found
- 24 | in his personal property when he was arrested or at his house?
- 25 A. That's correct.

- 1 Q. And so, you don't know who has the keys and who would have
- 2 been able to access that facility and who else might have had
- 3 keys, do you?
- 4 A. That's correct.
- 5 Q. And the person that gave this information wasn't anybody
- 6 | working for you that had a history that you knew anything
- 7 | about, it was just an anonymous call, right?
- 8 A. That's correct.
- 9 Q. And so, it could have been somebody that knows he has a
- 10 | storage facility, doesn't know anything else, and had a grudge
- 11 | against him; isn't that right?
- 12 A. Correct.
- 13 Q. Okay. And you don't know who wrote the ledgers or when
- 14 | they were written, do you?
- 15 A. No, I do not.
- 16 Q. And you don't know when the gun was put in there or who
- 17 put the gun in there, do you?
- 18 A. No, sir.
- 19 Q. And you don't know who put the safe in which it was found
- 20 in there, do you?
- 21 A. I do know that.
- 22 Q. Who put the safe in?
- 23 A. The storage manager, when we were speaking to the storage
- 24 manager, she recognized this individual. She said that she
- 25 | thought it was a Korean boy band because five of them came with

- 1 | a flatbed, and she vividly remembered them bringing in the
- 2 | six-foot safe.
- 3 Q. All right. So there were five people that had access to
- 4 it on that day. And whether or not he used it or not is not
- 5 something that you know?
- 6 A. Not that I know.
- 7 Q. And you can't say that he has been there in the last
- 8 year-and-a-half?
- 9 A. Not that I know of.
- 10 MR. MILLER: All right. No other questions.
- 11 THE COURT: All right. Any redirect?
- MS. CUELLAR: Briefly, Your Honor.
- 13 REDIRECT EXAMINATION
- 14 BY MS. CUELLAR:
- 15 Q. Now, during your investigation of the storage facility,
- 16 | did any other person seek to obtain access to the facility when
- 17 law enforcement was there?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 Q. Can you describe that for the Court.
- 20 A. In September, after Mr. Huynh was arrested, a person
- 21 | called the storage manager and tried to gain access. Went by
- 22 | the nickname Memo or Mo, is what the manager could remember.
- 23 They wanted to pay the late fees for it and the asked the
- 24 manager to cut the lock. The manager wouldn't do that.
- MS. CUELLAR: No further questions, Your Honor.

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               THE COURT: Okay. All right, thank you --
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               MR. MILLER: Just one brief follow-up. Just one.
 3
               THE COURT: Go ahead.
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          RECROSS-EXAMINATION
 5
    BY MR. MILLER:
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          So it was somebody else who was paying the fees, from what
 7
    you understand from the manager?
 8
               THE COURT: No.
 9
    A. No.
10
               THE COURT: He stated somebody offered to pay the
11
     late fee.
12
         Okay. But you don't know who was paying the fees?
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     A. No, I do not.
14
               MR. MILLER: All right. Sorry. Thank you.
15
               THE COURT: All right. Thank you, sir, you may
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    resume your seat.
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               NOTE: The witness stood down.
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               THE COURT: Mr. Miller, did you want to call any
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    witnesses?
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               MR. MILLER: No, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: Okay.
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               MR. MILLER: You have the letters that we filed,
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     which is new, we didn't have that before.
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               THE COURT: Right.
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               MR. MILLER: So dealing first with the statutory
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- 20 1 issue. Originally when the drug statutes were being redone and 2 the Guidelines were coming out and all that --3 THE COURT: I don't want to revisit the history of 4 the Bond Reform Act and --5 MR. MILLER: It's not the Act. It's the statute itself. 6 7 THE COURT: The statute. I don't want to revisit the 8 history of the statute. 9 MR. MILLER: All right. 10 THE COURT: I want you to tell me if you've got 11 evidence that would convince me that there are conditions of 12 release that are appropriate given the presumption and given 13 the facts that were elicited in the hearing before Judge 14 Nachmanoff, which I have every right to review and consider in 15 this new hearing. 16 Go ahead. 17 MR. MILLER: Right. For the record, I'm not trying 18 to argue with the Court. Judge Nachmanoff's order is 19 essentially conclusory as to what he found without making 20 specific fact findings and statements or reasons. And I just 21 want to make that clear, my position of that on the record. We
  - can agree to disagree as lawyers and judges sometimes do.

    Now, insofar as my client is concerned, he has a base of community support that was not available to Judge Nachmanoff

that is strong. And they are stable individuals.

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He had then and he has now a place to live with his brother Phillip who has nothing to do with anything to do with this case and works at the car dealership, has been dealing with car businesses for a long number of years.

He has no convictions on failures to appear. He is not someone where there is any reliable information about him ever having -- or there is no allegation about him making a sale to somebody or receiving drugs from anybody.

His relationship that has been asserted regarding the Reccless Tigers is, by itself, not a basis to say there are no conditions of release. And that is the strongest evidence the Government has, is that he is associated with the Reccless Tigers. But he is not charged with that as an offense. It's a drug case.

And there is a ledger that he didn't write. There is no evidence that he did write it. Or when it was, or how old it was, or who put it there, or what it means. Even if you accept what it means, it's still not something that was his.

And there is a lock, and he didn't have the key. And it wasn't found anywhere in any place associated with him despite the searches for it.

So there does not need to be, as the case law says, a guarantee. And you've got the <u>Jackson</u> case. And in <u>Jackson</u> I think it might have been the Outlaws, not the Hells Angels motorcycle gang. And the drug manufacturing was

methamphetamine. And Jackson was out under terms and conditions, and he honored them.

In <u>Shimorango</u> the guy was on video in the days of super radical anti-war stuff in the '70s about don't get caught, don't have any connections, be ready to flee all the time, and all kinds of things like that, and he was still released and he honored his conditions.

So if he's under electronic home detention with GPS and can't go anywhere except to his lawyer's office, or to court, or things like that, living with a brother who is a straight guy, and there is no question about that, in a case where there are allegations about him and the podcast and violence, but nothing happened.

So he's a guy that's been in bar fights. I've known lawyers, when they get drunk, watch out, because they're nasty. And when they're sober, you'd have no clue that that's the same person if you hadn't seen them in college or when they were out some place in certain situations. I have been to conferences, as have we all, where somebody, one of our colleagues, the night between the morning session and the next day session gets blasted and goes a little wacko. But that doesn't mean they are a risk of flight or going to harm anybody.

And there has been no harm against anyone where there was a claim of this is what I'm going to do and I'm not going to forget. That just hasn't happened. So that is not a fact.

And if he is going to be under electronic home detention and he's going to be living with his brother, who is willing to comply with what the Court wants, and he has a community network that stands behind him that is not connected to this case at all, then we're in a situation where we have someone who can be released and be monitored and the community is in a safe situation.

Because if he was really as dangerous as that was portrayed, then something would have happened in the violence action related to his uncle. And it didn't happen. It never happened. And there is no allegation of it. Not even the speculation of an allegation of it.

So all of those things combined and assembled together establish that there is a reasonable basis -- because the statute gives you open-ended carte blanche to do just about anything to assure his appearance, and there is no danger to the community.

And he can't prove to you that there is a guarantee, but he can prove to you that the community supports him. He can prove to you that he has a legitimate safe place to live. He has somebody willing to give him a job in a nail salon in Falls Church. And they are putting their business out there because if he's working in the salon, it's not like you're working in a back office, it's his face and his presence, they are risking their business on it. And they are willing to do

that.

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2 So if you take all of those things in combination,

3 you can't say that there are no conditions that wouldn't be

4 set.

THE COURT: All right, thank you.

6 Ms. Cuellar.

MS. CUELLAR: Your Honor, I don't know that much more needs to be said in addition to our filing. There is a rebuttable presumption in this case. Two courts have detained the defendant. He has a criminal history. Four times he has failed to appear. Whether convicted or not, he did not show up on the dates of those appearances. He has continued to engage in criminal conduct after convictions.

The people whose letters he has offered have known him during the time period when he has been convicted and committed crimes and when he has been a part of this conspiracy.

It is not the case that his brother has no connection at all to gang activity. His brother has been connected to gang activity. His brother has also received from the defendant \$25,000 in cash transfers --

MR. MILLER: Objection, Your Honor. That's not --

MS. CUELLAR: Well, it certainly was testified to at the hearing before Judge Nachmanoff, that the defendant

25 transferred over \$800,000 of cash proceeds. He has no job,

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     Your Honor. And some of those proceeds went to his brother.
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               So when you consider the fact that the defendant in
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     the part of the podcast that was played in court avowed his
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     allegiance to the Asian Boyz, who are a violent gang in Los
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     Angeles, and to Tiger Side, which is a part of the Reccless
     Tigers, it is one of the subordinate elements of the Reccless
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 7
     Tigers, you consider his criminal history, you consider the
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     overwhelming evidence that has led to his charges in this
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     case -- Mr. Miller keeps saying it's speculation. The evidence
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     is alleged in the filing, and it was testified to at the
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     detention hearing. It was also presented to the grand jury,
12
     and there is an indictment.
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               So there is at least probable cause at this point to
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     establish the defendant's quilt of the conduct, which is all
15
     that is needed for a bond determination, Your Honor.
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               THE COURT: All right, thank you.
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               MR. MILLER: Your Honor, may I briefly?
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               THE COURT: Yes, briefly.
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               MR. MILLER: Yes. He had a vaping business.
20
     that is, as anyone one reads the newspaper these days knows,
21
     highly profitable with --
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               THE COURT: Three months he had a business?
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               MR. MILLER: No, he had it for a couple years.
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               THE COURT: In California or here?
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               MR. MILLER: It was basically mail order. And he had
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a shop here for a while, they closed the shop, and it was mail order for a while, and then that closed down.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. MILLER: So it's not like he was doing nothing.

And there are two different groups. There are the Reccless Tigers, is the one with which they claim he is associated, but the mere gang membership in and of itself is not — the mere fact that somebody is charged with not having appeared in court does not mean that they violated a court order. People in Maryland get notices sent by the court so they know where to go. Fairfax doesn't do that. And other Northern Virginia jurisdictions don't. This court would let somebody know in writing.

So the fact that there were no findings that he violated the rules is significant.

THE COURT: Okay, thank you.

This is not a close case. The Government has demonstrated at the hearing before Judge Nachmanoff, and through the Pretrial Services investigation, and now here today with the additional evidence, that Mr. Huynh is heavily vested in drug dealing and in gang activity, and dangerous gang activity.

He has got a violent history. Multiple convictions for felony drug sales, misdemeanor drug possession, assault on a police officer, resisting arrest, carrying a knife, multiple

- 1 fights. The FBI witnessed him beating somebody with a baseball
- 2 bat. He has run nearly a million dollars through accounts in
- 3 the last three years, and multiple trips to different
- 4 locations.
- 5 He has been now indicted on a ten-year minimum
- 6 mandatory offense. And whether convicted or not of the
- 7 | failures to appear, one time failing to appear, that might be
- 8 | something I would look at. Four is not a coincidence that he
- 9 has been charged four times.
- So I don't find the evidence that he could go live
- 11 | with his brother and be on electronic monitoring comes close to
- 12 | conditions that would satisfy the statute and make him either
- 13 no longer a danger to the community or a risk of flight. I
- 14 think he is both. And that there are no conditions.
- So your motion for conditions of release is denied.
- 16 MR. MILLER: All right. Your Honor, there was
- another issue that we were going to address today that came up
- 18 at the arraignment, and I advised the Government of this
- 19 yesterday.
- 20 We were going to let the Court know whether or not he
- 21 was able to retain me. And I found yesterday that they can't
- 22 afford to get me in the case. And I let the Government know.
- 23 And I told -- reminded Ms. Cuellar that I would be
- 24 advising the Court about that today. So he is going to need to
- 25 have some counsel appointed to represent him. And he and I